



Human Resources Newsletter

October 2005 News

What's New, What's Hot

Hurricane Aftermath Updates

- **Displaced DOTD Employees** - The Human Resources Section continues to hear from employees who were temporarily displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and is helping to facilitate the employees' return to work as soon as possible. Affected employees whose previously-reported contact information has changed should contact HR as soon as possible via a special **toll-free number (1-866-783-5493)** between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. to report any changes.
- **HR Staff Surveys Displaced Employees to Assist in Return to Duty** - District 02 and CCCD employees who have not returned to work were contacted by HR staff in an effort to determine housing needs and ability to return to work. Over 120 displaced employees responded to the survey indicating an interest in temporary housing assistance. Other DOTD staff members are currently working with the Division of Administration and FEMA representatives to facilitate housing solutions.
- **Parish Mental Health Clinics Offer Support Service to Employees** - Parish Mental Health clinics are available to provide professional counseling to employees and their families who've been affected by Hurricane Katrina. Also available is a toll-free, 24-hours crisis hotline (1-866-615-8700) and an on-line resource sponsored by United Behavioral Health for any affected employee or family member. Callers are assisted by professional counselors and receive referrals to aid in dealing with personal difficulties resulting from the disaster.
- **Civil Service Rule Adopted Regarding Deadlines during Emergencies** - The Civil Service Commission adopted a rule change that allows all deadlines required by the CS rules to be suspended until the current state of emergency is over. This emergency period can be extended or terminated and appointing authorities will be notified if such changes occur.
- **Dual Employment** - As a result of employee inquiries, the HR Section advised appointing authorities that employees are prohibited, under Revised Statute 42:63, from employment with FEMA while simultaneously working for DOTD, regardless of whether they are on paid leave or leave without pay.
- **Hiring and Spending Freeze** - Governor Blanco issued an Executive Order 9/19/05 implementing a hiring/spending freeze in activities financed by State General Fund or funds whose balances revert to the State General Fund. Although DOTD is exempt from this order, a freeze has been put into effect by DOTD 9/22/05 on new hires and non-hurricane related travel expenditures.

Special Events

- **October 19 - Standing Committee on Human Resources (SCHR) Meeting**
- **October 27 - New Employee Orientation - HQ, 8 am to 12 noon**



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HR Unit Updates

Employee Relations Unit

- **Medicare Referendum Information.** Medicare Referendum ballots were mailed out to the majority of DOTD employees on September 15, 2005; these ballots must be returned to their HR representatives by September 30. Other employees will have ballots mailed to them at a later date, with a 10-day return deadline. This will be a continuous process until all affected employees have been provided the option to vote. Ballots for employees with zip codes beginning with 700, 701, 704 are being held pending verification that postal delivery is re-established; these employees will have until December 30 to return their ballots. **Special Note:** District 03 and 07 ballots were mailed out prior to Hurricane Rita. The return deadline has also been extended for these employees to December 30. Should any employee from these two districts need a new ballot, they should contact: **Ellen Catherine, (225) 379-1229.**

Operations Unit

- The changes in the 3rd phase of the Administrative Services (AS) Pay Schedule (increased minimums), effective September 9, 2005, will be implemented shortly. Please note that only employees who are below the new minimum of the pay range will receive an immediate increase in pay. The Operations Unit will enter all personnel actions and forward Employee Notification Forms to each district/section. **HQ HR Contact: Kay McRae, (225) 379-1288.**

Personnel Management Unit

- **Employee Recognition - Quarter Ending 09/30/05** Nomination deadline is Friday, October 7. However, due to the critical impact of Hurricane Katrina and/or Hurricane Rita on work operations/conditions, especially in those districts/sections directly hit, all field appointing authorities may choose one of the following options:
 - Continue nomination process for Quarter Ending 09/30/05 with deadline of October 7, 2005.
 - Extend nomination process to allow both quarters (ending 9/30 and 12/31) to be combined.
 - Combine award monies for Quarter Ending 09/30 from all categories to fund an appreciation event for respective District/CCCD.

Appointing authorities are asked to email **Stephanie Ortis, HR Manager**, by 10/6/05 to advise whether their respective District decides to take advantage of an extension.

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HR Unit Updates (continued)

Compensation Unit Update

- The **Police Series Job Study** has been approved by the Governor with the effective date of 08/29/05. No action has been taken however to implement this study as Civil Service has not yet finalized allocation criteria for affected positions. Appointing authorities will be promptly notified and provided with allocation criteria once complete.

The Compensation Unit has begun requesting position descriptions (SF-3's) for positions which have no SF-3 on file as part of the **SF-3 Cyclical Review Project**. The goal of this project is to ensure that all position descriptions are updated on a systematic basis. Please note that due to the large number of SF-3's required, these will be requested from districts/sections on a staggered basis. **HR Contact: Vicki Picou Cairns, PHR, (225) 379-1246.**